

# Pollard Memorial Board of Trustees - Meeting Minutes

## Date:

The meeting took place on April 5, 2023.

## Location:

PML, 401 Merrimack St. Lowell, MA, as a hybrid meeting, both in person and via Zoom.

## Opening Business

### Meeting call to order

The meeting was called to order by Donna Richards at 5:32 pm.

### Attendance

#### Present:

Steve Robichaud  
Donna Richards, Chair  
Katy Aronoff, Vice Chair  
Judith Davidson, Secretary  
Ellen Anstey  
Suzanne Frechette (on Zoom)  
Helen Littlefield  
Muriel Parseghian  
Amy Watson

#### Excused:

#### Guest(s):

Christine O'Connor

### Acceptance of / Amendment to Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved on a motion by Helen Littlefield and seconded by Donna Richards.

### Prior Meeting Minutes approval

The meeting minutes from *March 1, 2023* were unanimously accepted on a motion by Donna Richards and seconded by Amy Watson.

## Current Business

### Approval of Material Selection and Material Reconsideration Policies

There was a brief discussion of the issue of removal vs. reclassification. Then, Donna Richards made a motion for the trustees to approve the Materials Selection Policy and the Materials Reconsideration Policy. The motion was seconded by Katy Aronoff. The motion passed unanimously.

The two policies were approved with the understanding that minor editorial and formatting changes suggested by trustees will be made to the document before posting. A member of the

Governance committee will make these changes, the updated document will then be submitted to the Chair of the Governance Committee, Chair of the Trustees, and Library Director. The Library Director will provide the PML webmaster with a copy of the final approved document that will then be posted to the web page for public access, as well as copies made and posted in PML as appropriate.

Trustee Muriel Parseghian asked that in the minutes a note is made about the effort that went into producing these policy changes.

### Literacy Volunteers Program

At the trustees' request, Library Director, Steve Robichaud made a brief presentation on the PML Literacy Volunteers program, providing the trustees with background information on the program—its history, staff, scope of participation, library collections, and budget. This information can be found in the Directors Report, included at the end of the minutes.

Some of the clarification Robichaud provided in response to trustee questions included:

- The program began in Lowell in 1984—39 years ago.
- Two part-time staff are employed: Sarah Miller, Literacy Program Director at 19 hours and Mary Hartman, Literacy Assistant, also a part-time employee.
- The program budget is approximately \$18,000, which is paid by a grant from the national organization, Literacy Volunteers of America, administered through the State. PML receives three payments over the course of the year.
- PML purchases materials appropriate to the program participants' needs and these materials serve as the New Readers Collection. PML staff have just begun discussion about what new materials are needed to update and improve this collection.
- PML provides the LVA program with two office spaces (for Director and Assistant) and a private tutor meeting space, within the PML building.

Questions also arose regarding these issues:

- How is the tutoring program different from the School Departments Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language classes?
- How is the program promoted? How do students hear about it?

Steve Robichaud promised to include Literacy Volunteer information in future director reports, including copies of the newsletter and monthly report produced by the program.

### Update on Strategic Plan

Trustee Chair, Donna Richards, had requested a report from each of the Strategic Plan teams in preparation of an event planned for National Library Week. She received reports from each of the teams that included accomplishments to date and areas of focus for 2023. She will forward these to all trustees and team leaders.

She reminded the trustees that Staff, Trustees, Foundation, and Friends are hosting a reception for special supporters of PML on **Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup> starting at 5:00PM** during National Library

Week (April 23 - 29). The invitation was sent to City Councilors, City Administration, School Committee, School Administration, our State Representatives, Senator Kennedy, and Congresswoman Trahan, Health and Human Services Director and Department Heads who report to her, Lowell Sun, as well as some community partners. Richards asked if anyone had suggestions for guests to the event, contact her and she will provide an invitation.

Richards emphasized that this is an opportunity to showcase the library and continue advocacy for its needs. Before the event she will provide trustees with talking points. The mayor has agreed to attend and will make a brief speech at the beginning of the 4/25/23 event. Light refreshments will be served.

In advance of this event, Richards has been asked to say something about National Library Week at the City Council meeting of Tuesday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, under the agenda item of mayor's news.

## Reports

### Chairperson's Report

Ellen Anstey will be a member of the Nomination Committee and Art Committee, and she will be the trustee representative on the Strategic Plan Welcome Group.

Richards raised the issue that it might make sense to consider moving the PML trustee meeting from the first Wednesday of each month to the second Wednesday of the month because there are significant conflicts with the first Wednesday. The school council meets on the first and third Wednesday of each month, and Health and Human Services Directors meet on the first Monday of the month. If we changed our meeting to the second Wednesday of the month we would have more opportunity to connect to the school board and school administrators, as well as having more opportunity to meet with the Head of Health and Human Services who oversees PML. We will consider a formal request on this concern at a later meeting.

### Committee Reports

#### Governance/Policy Committee (Judy Davidson)

Davidson presented an overview of the actions that have been taken on the policy initiative. (This handout is included as an attachment at the end of the minutes). Discussion followed on the User Behavior Policy, Public Comment Policy, and other policies that are currently in the pipeline for review.

#### *User Behavior Policy*

User Behavior Policy was revised by the Governance Committee. It has been reviewed by the Library Director and Library Staff, and it is now being returned to the Governance Committee for review and revision. Once the final draft has been approved by the Committee, it will be forwarded to the trustees for their review and approval. We anticipate the new policy will be completed, approved and posted by the June 2023 trustee meeting.

#### *Public Comment Policy*

PML has not had a Public Comment Policy and in the process of preparing to draft this policy, a significant legal decision took place in the Commonwealth that will affect the final wording of the PML policy. Trustees asked, given the circumstances, would a policy be necessary, as well as asking if the city already had such a policy that we could employ. It was noted that the American Library Association strongly urges libraries to develop a Public Comment Policy for their own protection. The Massachusetts Municipal Association has an upcoming

zoom meeting to discuss the implications of the recent court case (See announcement below under “New Business”). It was also noted that any policy we develop in this area will need to be reflected in the template of our monthly meeting agenda, which refers to public comment. The governance committee will begin drafting this policy as soon as possible.

#### *Other Policies in Revision*

The following revised policies have been sent to the library director for rolling out to library staff for review as appropriate: Internet and Computer Use Policy, and Child Safety Policy (formerly the Unattended Child Policy).

A new Meeting Room Policy was also drafted but needs to be revised by the Governance Committee considering new information on the topic provided by United for Library’s trustee training. This is in process.

Steve Robichaud, Library Director, mentioned how animated library staff have been in their discussions about these policies. They appreciate the opportunity to share their expertise and interest in these issues that are so central to their work.

#### *Art Committee (Amy Watson/Donna Richards)*

Two issues were brought forward by the Art Committee: 1) Use of the Davis Fund for a special project; and, 2) Inventory of PML Art Works and curation of the Audubon prints.

#### *Use of the Davis Fund for a Special Project*

Donna Richards made a motion for the Trustees to approve use of up to \$2,500 from the John Davis Fund to pay Kevin Harkins for professional photography of 5 paintings in the PML collection (*Frederick Stickney, John Davis, Elizabeth Davis, Oliver Howe Moulton, and the Rialto*).

Harkins was selected by Bridget Cooley, Community Outreach Coordinator, as the best photographer for understanding the scope of the project. This project will require the library be closed as the photographer does this work. PML will retain rights to the photographs of the paintings.

The motion was seconded by Judith Davidson and Helen Littlefield. The motion passed unanimously.

#### *Inventory of Library Artwork and Curation of Audubon Prints*

Linda Kilbride (former Trustee) was given an inventory of all PML artwork from Rosemary Noon (former trustee and current Library Foundation member). Kilbride is putting this information in an excel file. Discussion of this issue included: Creating a map of where each art item is located, seeking out an intern who could be used for this project, and again, the storage and rotation of the Audubon prints of which some are currently in display at PML and the Senior Center. A question also arose about the ways the art items are insured, and if this comes under the city insurance.

#### *Director’s Report*

Steve Robichaud prepared the April Director’s Report and distributed to trustees via email prior to the meeting. (The report is attached at the end of the minutes.)

He highlighted several key issues in the report for the trustees. Of particular importance were the repairs to the elevator. Repairs have not been started yet because DCAMM, requires a contractor certification, which is not held by the bidder (Otis Elevator). The Library Director will re-contact the city planning office to check on the bidder certification issue that has been raised.

Lighting has been improved throughout the building, and many dark corners are now illuminated.

Robichaud is waiting to hear back from the Historical Commission about the exterior signage. Soft signage (a banner) is being installed by Monday.

Two candidates for the part-time custodial positions were approved: One has completed all preliminaries and is starting on Tues, April 8<sup>th</sup>. The other individual failed the physical test and is now ineligible for the position. Robichaud will be contacting the third candidate who applied to see if they are still interested.

The three positions for the Bookmobile will be submitted to Human Resources for action as soon as possible. The completion of the bookmobile has been delayed and it looks more like June.

Applications for the Community Outreach Coordinator, the position vacated by Bridget Cooley, are being accepted by Human Resources.

A question arose for the Library Director about the remaining funds in the budget that will need to be spent. The library staff has been working on that and have identified several items that they can order quickly to meet the end of the year deadline. Assistant Director, Bridget Cooley, is taking charge of this issue.

## Grants

Robichaud attended a zoom meeting on April 4<sup>th</sup> to learn more about the Cultural sector ARPA Grants. Unfortunately, it appears PML does not meet the criteria for the City's Cultural Organization Recovery Program.

## PML Foundation (Donna Richards)

- The meeting was held on March 15, 2023.
- Discussed preparations for Annual Author Night to be held on May 4, 2023.
- Discussed logistics of the Elinor Lipman Award.
- The next meeting is April 19, 2023.

## Friends of the PML (Helen Littlefield)

- Helen Littlefield provided the following Friends Liaison Report.
  - The Board meeting is next Thurs (4/13) from 6-7 in the Director's Office.
  - Plans are underway for a May Book Sale—more information to be released soon.

## Old Business

- There was no old business.

## New Business

- The Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) is hosting a webinar for appointed and elected officials that will discuss the importance of government transparency and review developments related to the state's public records and open meeting laws. Attorneys Lauren Goldberg and Janelle Austin of KP Law will address the current state of each law, as well as practical considerations for municipalities given the [March Supreme Judicial Court decision](#) on the regulation of public comment at public meetings."
- MMA will be hosting a webinar on Public Records and Open Meeting Laws: Current Trends for Municipalities on April 25, 2023, at 12:00 pm. Most of their webinars are recorded for viewing after the event.
- Register here:  
[https://mma.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_OFiCwsyHTtOqZedx1McU5w#/registration](https://mma.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_OFiCwsyHTtOqZedx1McU5w#/registration)

## Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 PM on a motion by Donna Richards and seconded by Helen Littlefield. All in attendance were in favor.
- Our next meeting is Wednesday, **MAY 3, 2023**.

## Attachments



Library Director  
Report to Trustees 04



4-5-23 Policy Action  
Update.docx